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PROCEDURE INSTRUCTION LETTER NO. I07-V-06

Terry Bentley for

FROM: KEVIN G. STRICKLIN
Administrator for
Coal Mine Safety and Health

SUBJECT: Periodic Testing of MSHA provided Multi-Gas Detectors

Scope

This Procedure Instruction Letter (PIL) is intended for Coal Mine Safety and Health (CMS&H) personnel.

Purpose

This PIL provides instructions for the periodic testing of multi-gas detectors used by CMS&H personnel. This testing follows the requirements and recommendations of the instrument manufacturers.

Procedure Instruction

It is necessary for the Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) to determine if the mine atmosphere is safe for miners and for MSHA personnel working at coal mines. Multi-gas detectors are an invaluable tool in determining compliance with the requirements of 30 C.F.R. and in verifying whether MSHA personnel are working in a safe environment. These units must be checked periodically to verify that the gas sensors are responding as expected and the accuracy is maintained according to the manufacturer's specifications.

In order to maintain the performance and accuracy of multi-gas instruments used by CMS&H personnel, all CMS&H multi-gas detectors must be tested according to the following schedule:

- All multi-gas detectors used by enforcement personnel will be calibrated according to the manufacturer's specifications at least every 31 days (includes such instruments as Solaris, TMX-412, ITX, ATX-620); and
- All multi-gas detectors used by enforcement personnel will be "bump" tested according to the manufacturer's specifications at the beginning of each day of use (includes such instruments as Solaris, TMX-412, ITX).

Instruments that fail the “bump” test must be re-calibrated prior to use in the field. Any instrument unable to be calibrated according to the manufacturer’s specifications must not be used. Documentation of “bump” tests and the monthly calibration of each instrument will be maintained by the districts for a period of at least the previous fiscal year plus the current fiscal year (ex. all of FY 2006 through the present for FY 2007). The documentation can consist of:

- the computer data files that are produced by the instrument and an automated calibration unit; or
- a copy of the printed test results that are stored in a central location; or
- records maintained by district personnel.

To ensure these testing requirements do not interfere with the ability of Agency personnel to perform field inspection duties, each office should have sufficient calibration gas on hand to have a back-up tank available at all times.

Background

Questions have arisen concerning the manufacturers’ requirements and recommendations for periodic checks to maintain the performance of multi-gas detectors used by CMS&H personnel. This PIL establishes the frequency and documentation of these tests.

Authority

The Federal Mine Safety and Health Act of 1977, as amended, 30 U.S.C. § 801 et seq.; 30 C.F.R.

Issuing Office and Contact Person

Coal Mine Safety and Health, Health Division
Robert A. Thaxton, (202) 693-9515
E-mail: Thaxton.robert@dol.gov

Internet Availability

This PIL may be viewed on the Internet by accessing MSHA’s web site (www.msha.gov), click on “Compliance Info” and then click “Procedure Instruction Letters.”

Distribution

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